



Jane Swift
Governor
William O'Leary
Secretary
Barbara Jean Wood
Commissioner

Summer 2001

MCDHH NEWS

A Publication of the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Program Round-Up

by James O'Donnell, Deputy Commissioner, Policy & Programs

This Issue...

Program Round-Up...

...page 1

Horace Mann Students Honor Wood & Herrera...

...page 1

Commissioner's Corner: A Safe and Accessible Summer.

...page 2

After Hours Emergency On Call...Service Profile.

...page 2

Legislative and Regulation Updates

...page 3

Outdoor Exploration...ASL Interpreted.

...page 4

May 31st All Staff Retreat...

...page 4

CATTS...Service Profile.

...page 5

Case Management...Service Profile.

...page 5

Hearing Aid Services and Satisfaction Questionnaire...Survey Results...

...page 6

ALDAcon 2001...Press Release

...page 7

Welcome to the summer edition of our newsletter. In the past year, we have expanded our readership and changed the format of the newsletter to make it more attractive and to provide you with information that is current and usable. You will note this issue includes information from each of our main programs as they head for the finish line of the fiscal year-June 30th. We hope to make this a standard feature of future newsletters to tell you what the programs are doing and what is new in their respective departments. In this issue, important aspects of each department are described.

Interpreter/Communication Access Real-time Transliteration (CART) services, for example, describes the after hours-emergency services referral system. This is a critical service that we provide and is the subject of constant scrutiny and improvement. Individuals involved in medical and legal emergencies need essential communication for their health and well being. We are committed to providing that service although resources in this area are still limited.

Case Management's contribution covers the range of services available to the consumer. The goal here is to make all potential clients know the full range of services available including children, adults, and senior citizens: indeed, we do serve all ages.

Communication Access, Technology and Training Services (CATTS - the folks who bring you this newsletter) discuss some of its services, using the theme "spreading the word on communication access". Not mentioned is a current effort to produce some public service announcements to address the negativity connected with hearing loss for many people. More and more people are purchasing hearing aids, up to six million across the country, yet this number is only a quarter of the population of potential users. What holds back these individuals is the topic of those PSA's, so look for them later this summer.

As you read these articles, please note that each of them refer to specific goals:

- Interpreter/CART aims for 100% coverage of emergency requests.
- Case Management wants everyone who needs social services to receive them.
- CATTS focuses on educating the public about providing communication access and helping consumers obtain this access.

These goals are the direct results of input we received over the years from the community, you, our consumers and constituents. We keep up to date on the needs of the community by relying on your input. In an age of rapid technological and demographic change, we explore all possible innovations and ways of fulfilling those needs. Our new website is constantly updated to provide new information and educate the public.

Lately, we have been getting more and more responses to our surveys, subway posters and newsletters. This is great! Please continue to contact us if you have any requests, comments or feedback that will help us improve what we do: making the world accessible for people who are Deaf, hard of hearing or late deafened. ■



SUMMER SAFETY TIPS

- Use sun block lotion.
- Swim with a partner.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Stay Safe/Play Smart.

Horace Mann Students Honor Wood and Herrera

by Marvin Sallop, Interpreter to Commissioner

Students of the Horace Mann School for the Deaf honored Commissioner Barbara Jean "BJ" Wood and Business Manager Edgar Herrera as "Successful Deaf Leaders 2001" on May 30, 2001 for their contributions to the Deaf Community and for serving as role models for students. Their photographs, along with a plaque of accomplishments and words to students, were framed and placed on the wall in the school's Hall of Fame for Successful Deaf Leaders. The Commissioner addressed the students on their future leadership roles. ■

Commissioner's Corner

by Barbara Jean Wood, MCDHH Commissioner

Hello and Happy Summer!

It is the time of year when you and your family will be enjoying the beautiful weather and enjoying outdoor activities.

Summer safety is on our minds. As a text telephone user, you can help ensure safety in your community. Are your town/city resources accessible for all Deaf and hard of hearing citizens? With your assistance, MCDHH can work with those towns/cities that are not accessible.

Here is what you can do:

Using your TTY, call 911 and explain you are assisting 911 operators in their ability to handle TTY calls. If you have any problems, please offer to make practice calls and contact MCDHH for follow up.

Using your TTY, call your local hospital emergency line and explain you are testing their ability to handle TTY emergency calls. If you see a need for further training to the hospital, please offer your assistance through practice calls and refer to MCDHH for additional training.

The only way we can assure accountability is for us, as consumers, to work in partnership with our own communities.

Please see our website for information on 911 and hospital accessibility or call our office at (617) 695.7500 v or (617) 695.7600 TTY. Also, if you have questions, you can call Monna Wallace, 911 Trainer Program Manager at 781.944.5147 TTY.

On behalf of the staff at MCDHH, we wish you all a safe and accessible summer! ■



WHERE ARE THE OFFICES?

Boston

**MCDHH - Administrative & Boston/
Northeast Regional Office**
210 South Street, fifth floor
Boston, MA 02111
(617) 695.7500 Voice
(617) 695.7600 TTY
(800) 882.1155 Voice
(800) 530.7570 TTY
(617) 695.7599 FAX

Dorchester

MCDHH - Executive Office
150 Mount Vernon Street
Boston, MA 02125
(617) 695.7500 Voice
(617) 695.7600 TTY

Plymouth

MCDHH - Southeast Regional Office
67 Industrial Park Drive
Plymouth, MA 02360
(508) 746.8408 Voice/TTY
(508) 746.8365 FAX

Springfield

MCDHH - Western Regional Office
Springfield State Building
436 Dwight Street, Suite 204
Springfield, MA 01103
(413) 788.6427 Voice/TTY
(413) 731.5177 FAX

Worcester

MCDHH - Central Regional Office
340 Main Street, Suite 700
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 755.4084 Voice/TTY
(508) 752.5441 FAX

Editor: Chris Porter
MCDHH
210 South Street, fifth floor,
Boston, MA 02111
(617) 695-7500 Voice
(617) 695-7600 TTY

After Hours Emergency On Call...What is it?

by Patty Medbery, Emergency Services Referral Specialist

I have been the Emergency Referral Specialist since December 2000, and recently graduated from the Interpreter Training Program at Northern Essex Community College. As Emergency Referral Specialist, it is my role to handle emergency requests for interpreters from 2pm to 10pm Monday through Friday.

The service is designed to provide access for Deaf, hard of hearing and late-deafened individuals requiring communication needs such as American Sign Language or Signed English interpreters, Certified Deaf Interpreters, Oral Transliterators and CART Providers for emergencies in a wide range of situations such as medical, mental health and legal emergencies. An example of a medical emergency would be if a person has to go to the Emergency Room for an injury or illness that requires immediate attention. A psychiatric evaluation for a person in crisis is an example of a possible mental health emergency, while a legal emergency could take the form of an arrest or the filing of a restraining order.

If persons are in need of Interpreter/CART Services for emergencies after hours, the number to call is 800 249 9949. This number is accessible for hearing persons as well as deaf callers using TTY's. If an emergency occurs between the hours of 5pm and 10pm, the Emergency Referral Specialist handles the call by collecting information about the emergency, and dispatching the appropriate interpreter to the location. After 10pm on weekdays, as well as on weekends and holidays, calls to this toll-free number are transferred to an answering service that will handle the emergency in similar fashion.

The Interpreter/CART "on call" list is structured on a volunteer basis. The Commonwealth is divided into eight regions such as Northeast, Southeast, Central and West. Interpreters who are "on call" are active from 5pm to 9am during the week, and from 9am on Saturday to 9am the following Monday, as well as 24 hours on holidays. Our goal is to schedule interpreters for all eight regions and for all of the shifts. These interpreters are qualified for the referred emergencies. We refer to a special back up list of appropriate and qualified communication facilitators when CART Providers, Certified Deaf Interpreters and Oral Transliterators are needed.

Our department's progress has been quite spectacular: the average fill rate for emergency requests since December is 76%. In the most recent months of April and May the fill rates were 94% and 84%, respectively. Our goal is to ultimately fill every request we receive within 30 minutes or less response time. MCDHH is fully committed to attaining this goal. ■

Regulation and Legislative Update: June 2001

by Jeannine Dusombre, Legal Counsel to the Commissioner

Here is a brief list of some legislation the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) is following for this legislation session. Many of the bills have not been scheduled for public hearings at this time.

2001-2002 House & Senate Bills of Interest and Support to the MCDHH

<i>Bill Number & Name</i>	<i>Sponsor</i>	<i>Bill Assigned to:</i>	<i>MCDHH's Comment on Bills</i>
<u>S. 105</u> An Act Requiring the Posting of Signs Warning of the Danger of Exposure to Amplified Sound in Health Clubs	Senator Morrissey	Commerce & Labor Committee	MCDHH provided testimony about how loud noise levels can have real medical consequences including hearing loss. The Commission also wrote letters of support.
<u>S. 735</u> An Act Providing Coverage for Hearing Aids (Provides insurance coverage for cost of two hearing aids every three years.)	Senator Brewer	Senate Committee on Insurance	MCDHH provided testimony about the need to have insurance coverage for the costs of hearing aids. The Committee on Insurance has not taken any action on the bill.
<u>S. 759</u> An Act to Require Reimbursement for the Costs of Providing Competent Interpreter Services	Senator Moore	Insurance Committee	The bill provides that health insurance, including Medicaid, will reimburse for the costs of Interpreter Services. MCDHH provided testimony to the Committee.
<u>H. 833</u> An Act to Ensure the Provision of Communications Access for the Deaf in Health Care Situations	Rep. Jay R. Kaufman	Insurance Committee	The bill calls for Health Insurance Coverage to pay for Interpreters and CART Services in health care situations. Please check with the General Court website for hearing date.
<u>S. 1585</u> An Act to allow Access for People Raising or Training Dogs for the Purpose of Becoming Service Dogs to Assist People with Disabilities	Senator Morrissey	State Administration Committee	The legislation will allow people raising or training service dogs to have the same rights as an individuals with a disability under the American with Disabilities Act. MCDHH includes the bill because of the relevance to "hearing dogs" that are trained to assist people who are Deaf or hard of hearing.
<u>H. 1155</u> An Act Relative to Hearing Aids and a similar bill: <u>H. 3483</u> An Act Relative to the labeling and distribution of hearing aid batteries.	Rep. Louis L. Kafta Rep. Linda E. Harkins	Commerce and Labor Committee	Both bills call for date stamp or otherwise labeling hearing aid batteries for the purpose of indicating the shelf life expectancy.
<u>H. 2137</u> An Act Relative to the Certification of Teachers and Education Interpreters for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students	Rep. Jehlen	Education, Arts, and Humanities Committee	MCDHH provided testimony at the public hearing.
<u>H. 2138</u> An Act Establishing a Bill of Rights for Children Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing	Rep. Jehlen	Education, Arts, and Humanities Committee	The bill establishes the "rights" of Deaf and hard of hearing children in education settings. MCDHH continues its strong advocacy for passage of <u>H.2138</u> .
<u>H. 2160</u> An Act Providing for the Registration Of Interpreters for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	Rep. Jehlen	Committee on Health Care	Deputy Commissioner Jim O'Donnell and Director of Interpreter/CART Services, Stephanie Clark testified at the hearing. Both testified to the need of involvement of Interpreters for final language in the bill. The Committee expects that a new bill will be substituted for the current <u>H.2160</u> .

**None of the bills have been reported out of Committee.*

Continued on page 8

ASL-Interpreted Summer Fun with OUTDOOR EXPLORATIONS

by Ruth Celia Kahn, Marketing Consultant, Outdoor Explorations

Picture this: you and your crewmates raise the sail of a 156-foot schooner in Boston Harbor. Or, you're sailing a boat for the very first time on the Charles River. How about this? You're climbing a steep wall, and learning to handle the ropes. Or, you're kayaking in a cool, pristine pond. Maybe you're part of a team building accessible walkways and gardening in Boston's Southwest Corridor Park. All of these journeys are led by experienced guides. Best of all, you and your Deaf friends and family members are accompanied by professional ASL interpreters.

These are a small sample of the activities offered by a unique nonprofit organization called Outdoor Explorations (OE). OE uses the outdoors as a catalyst for advancing community-wide inclusion of people with disabilities. Since 1990, OE has been bringing together thousands of people of all abilities and from all cultures to participate in outdoor experiences, to learn new outdoor skills (such as kayaking, rock climbing, and sailing), or to undertake community service projects improving local green spaces. All OE activities will allow you to participate in complete outdoor experiences, connect with others, and appreciate nature. OE provides a unique way to make lasting friendships while you're having fun in the sun.

OE has activities for everyone! Whether you're an experienced sea captain or someone who has always dreamed of learning to sail a small boat, OE will challenge, empower, and inspire you.

Bonnie Kaplan, Director of Cultural Access at Very Special Arts (VSA) arts of Massachusetts, can't wait to embark on her first Outdoor Exploration. "I love being on the water and on boats. I used to own boats from the time I was 13 years old," explains Bonnie. "That's why I'm planning to sail on the schooner!"

"OE has great staff. And it's accessible by TTY. They offer great programs and they're so willing to make themselves much more accessible to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community," she says.

You will find the calendar listings in the MSAD's Deaf Community News (DCN) which tells you of this year's ASL interpreted OE activities or you can find it in the OE's website at www.outdoorex.org. Interpreters include Natalie Methot, Diana Doucette, and Kayla Kirkpatrick. So be sure to call OE at (781) 395-4184/TTY or (781) 395-4999/Voice SOON to reserve your space for sailing, kayaking, climbing, hiking, and/or community environmental service projects.

For more information, contact: Jim Schultz, Outdoor Explorations, jhschultz@outdoorex.org, (781) 395-4999. ■

**HAVE A SAFE SUMMER
FROM ALL OF US AT
MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION FOR THE
DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING!**

**Are you a Deaf or hard of hearing person
in need of a better telephone system in order
to communicate on the phone?**

Call Mary Macone at MCDHH to find out if you qualify for a free or low cost TTY or amplified phone through the Verizon distribution program!

(617) 695.7500 Voice
(617) 695.7600 TTY

May 31 - All Staff Retreat

by Deborah M. Porter, Communication Access Trainer

If you tried to call MCDHH on May 31st of this year, you would not have been able to reach any of our regular staff members. The reason for that is because we took time out of our busy schedules to have an all staff retreat. Because MCDHH has four separate offices, there are few chances for all of the staff members to get together and re-focus on what is important to our agency. This year's staff retreat was held in West Boylston, Massachusetts and has since been pronounced a resounding success!

A committee of five individuals planned the retreat. The focus of the retreat was to show how cooperation and communication are essential to achieving goals. This was achieved through several different exercises that the staff members worked on together. B.J. Wood, our Commissioner, also gave a speech about the changing face of deafness and hearing loss. With technology and medical procedures advancing rapidly, it is critical that we at the Commission keep up with the pace and ensure that we have current information.

There were also two award ceremonies held during the day. One ceremony was to commend and thank an individual selected from each department for his or her hard work. The other award ceremony was also to recognize individuals throughout the Commission for their special achievements.

All in all, the feedback from the retreat has been very positive. It has helped to re-energize people and also brought the focus back to what is important about what we do. We would not be here without the people whom we serve, and we wish to serve you in the best way possible. ■



Administration & Finance Dept.
at retreat in West Boylston, MA.

Communication Access, Technology, & Training Services

by Jonathan O'Dell, Director

Our primary goal is to provide general public education and information on the concept of communication access, and how it can be made a reality. We provide this education in several different ways:

Our **Communication Access Training Specialists** and **Hard of Hearing Outreach Specialist** provide in-service educational events, workshops and professional trainings on issues relating to Communication Access in the public and private sectors. A partial list of our audiences includes:

- Municipal, state and federal government offices
- Hospitals, clinics, medical service providers, EMT's
- Medical and legal schools
- Correctional institutions, law enforcement personnel
- Private and public sector businesses
- Juvenile and Trial court personnel
- Schools and Universities

Our **Information Specialist** responds to all general requests for information and develops, maintains and updates a comprehensive collection of Information Series documents. Every two years, MCDHH publishes a statewide "Resource Guide" on all offices, programs and services providing assistance to persons who are Deaf, late deafened or hard of hearing.

Our **Electronic Media & Print Specialist** produces the quarterly "MCDHH News", which has a circulation of 36,000 and makes our readers aware of the most recent developments in the judicial and legislative fields as well as offering useful information on issues affecting quality of life with hearing loss.

MCDHH Online, our homepage on the Internet, provides an expanded version of the same information, including downloadable and text-only versions of the newsletters and information sheets. It also features banner ads drawing attention to special regional events, links to a multitude of invaluable resources, and an interactive training request form that makes scheduling an educational in-service quite literally as easy as clicking on a mouse. ■

Case Management Today

by Marilyn Levin, Director

The Case Management Department provides a range of services to individuals of all ages who are Deaf, late deafened, or hard of hearing. We provide information and referral for clients on where to get services and we provide technical assistance to agencies on how to make services accessible to people with hearing loss.

Many of our clients have multiple needs requiring services from several state agencies, such as social services, medical assistance, mental health, public health, etc. These clients are evaluated on their needs and a service plan is developed to see that agencies and providers deliver appropriate services. Case Managers assist agencies to provide good communication access so that clients may reach their goals to become more self-sufficient. The concept is a team effort for the benefit of the clients. A key goal and by-product of this work with the agencies and providers is developing awareness of the needs of our clients so that we can improve services for all of them.

Case Managers, who are bilingual in ASL and English, have experience in dealing with difficult and urgent situations, such as when clients are in jail, homeless or in the hospital. Case Managers have specialized training in dealing with the court system and often accompany clients to court or related legal situations. Sometimes the service plan calls for referral to independent living centers so that clients can get skills training, peer counseling and assistance on housing, social security, and the like. Our goal is to make sure that clients do not "fall through the cracks" or find themselves isolated without services.

Our three Children's Specialists offer specialized services to families that have children who are Deaf or hard of hearing. When an infant is diagnosed with hearing loss under the Newborn Screening Law, there are many issues that are bewildering: early intervention services, language development, audiological testing, technology such as cochlear implants and hearing aids, and access to educational services. The specialists work with families on all of these issues surrounding deafness and hearing loss.

Children's Specialists offer support and guidance by providing clear information, discussion of options, access to communication training, referral to appropriate technology, help with coping with the service systems, and planning for the future. Children's services covers infancy to early adulthood and we assist parents in the development of Individual Education Plans (IEP) in schools to seek the best education for the child.

A recent addition to the Case Management Department services is the Assistive Technology (AT) program to purchase hearing aids and other assistive listening devices for qualified clients. This program helps people to obtain hearing aids, alerting devices, and communication training. In addition to case management services, the Department administers eligibility determination for the telephone/TTY program provided by Verizon.

There are seven regions covering the state, working out of Boston Central office and three regional offices: West, Central and Southeast. The staff is sixteen, four of whom are part time: Director, lead Case Manager, eight adult Case Managers, three Children's Specialists, one Case Referral Specialist, an Administrative Assistant, and one Benefits Specialist. ■

The Hearing Aid Services and Satisfaction Questionnaire: Survey Results

By Carren J. Stika, Ph.D.* and Mark Ross, Ph.D.**

Included in the December 2000 MCDHH Newsletter was a questionnaire that surveyed consumers regarding their satisfaction and nature of the services received when obtaining their last hearing aid(s). About 650 subscribers of the MCDHH Newsletter completed the questionnaire and we would like to thank each and every one of you for your help. The project could not have been completed without your participation. In total, 942 hearing aid users completed the questionnaire, with the remainder drawn from members of Self Help for Hard of Hearing People (SHHH) and the SayWhatClub.

The background of the project lies in the fact that in the United States today two groups are licensed by various states to select and fit hearing aids to persons with hearing loss: Audiologists and Hearing Instrument Specialists (HIS). Audiologists receive their training in colleges and universities and currently require a minimum of a master's degree in order to be eligible for professional certification and to meet state licensing requirements. Typically, hearing instrument specialists receive their certification after a working for a period (about a year) with a licensed dispenser, after which they are required to pass both practical and theoretical examinations. No formal academic qualifications are required.

Given the disparity in the background and training of these two groups, the question arises regarding consumer satisfaction with the services they received from the members of either group. Are both groups perceived equally by the consumers whom they serve? We were also interested in other aspects of the hearing aid selection process, such as the cost of the hearing aids, whether one or two aids were provided, number of visits and hours required, and whether certain other services were provided.

Preliminary results indicate that, overall, people reported being *satisfied* with the services they received when obtaining hearing aids from both the audiologists and the hearing instrument specialists. However, and this was the key finding, consumers were significantly *more satisfied* with the services they received from audiologists than from hearing instrument specialists (keeping in mind that there was a large overlap in consumer satisfaction between the groups). Supporting this result was the fact that more consumers who saw an audiologist were willing to refer other people to the same specialist than were consumers who received their hearing aids from a hearing instrument specialist. Results also indicated that audiologists tended to spend more time with consumers than did hearing instrument specialists.

Most of the other relationships were not significant. Both audiologists and hearing instrument specialists charged about the same for hearing aids and both groups recommended at about the same frequency that the consumer purchase two hearing aids rather than just one. Interestingly, though we would have expected this, the price of the hearing aids was not related to satisfaction. That is, the higher price hearing aids did not necessarily produce greater satisfaction. Those who received higher price hearing aids, however, did tend to spend more time and make more visits to their dispenser than did those people who received lower price hearing aids. This is probably due to the fact that the more expensive hearing aids are also more complex and require more fitting time.

The questionnaire also asked the respondents whether they received from their hearing aid dispenser information and/or services in fifteen different areas (e.g., information about assistive listening devices, coping strategies, care of the hearing aid). While generally, consumers received slightly more of this information and services from audiologists than from hearing instrument specialists, the differences were not clinically significant. Most hearing aid dispensers provided consumers with information that dealt specifically with the hearing loss and the direct care of the hearing aid, battery and earmolds. Where both groups fell short was in providing consumers with information about telecoils, direct audio input (DAI), other types of assistive technology, coping and communication strategies, and group hearing aid orientation programs. Standardized self-assessment scales were rarely used, either before or after the hearing aid fitting. Consumers were not informed regarding the existence of such groups as Self Help for Hard of Hearing People, or the Association of Late Deafened Adults.

We conclude that while consumers tended to be more satisfied with the performance of the hearing aids they received from audiologists than HIS that, specifically in regards to the nature of the services provided consumers, both groups fell short of what we believe to be necessary. ■

* Associated with the Rehabilitation Research Training Center in the California School of Professional Psychology, San Diego, CA.

** Associated with the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center, Lexington School for the Deaf, Jackson Heights, NY

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

The MCDHH News is published 4 times a year.

If you do not receive the MCDHH News in the mail and would like to get it, either mail this subscription form or call the CATTS Department at MCDHH and we will gladly add you to our mailing list. Please write legibly.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip Code: _____

Mail this form to: MCDHH, Newsletter Editor, 210 South Street, Fifth Floor, Boston, MA 02111

ALDAcon 2001: ODYSSEY BY THE SEA

by Lori Heir, Public Relations, ALDACon2001

**The 13th Annual Conference of the Association of Late Deafened Adults
October 31 ~ November 4, 2001 Hyatt Regency ~ Newport, Rhode Island**



Courtesy of ALDAcon 2001

From October 31-November 4, 2001 ALDA-Boston will host the 13th Annual Conference of the Association of Late Deafened Adults (ALDA, Inc.) at the Hyatt Regency in Newport, Rhode Island. Aptly themed "Odyssey by the Sea," ALDAcon 2001 promises to be as memorable as Newport itself, the legendary seaside city otherwise known as "America's First Resort."

Since ALDA's initiation in 1987, the organization has taken pride in serving the needs of people who lose their hearing after acquiring a spoken language. One of ALDA's highlights is its annual conference, fondly called ALDAcon. Like conferences in previous years, ALDAcon 2001 will offer late-deafened, hard of hearing, and Deaf guests, as well as professionals working in related fields, an opportunity to learn and socialize in a supportive atmosphere where communication flows freely.

To foster a sense of belonging and facilitate the exchange of information, all workshops and social gatherings scheduled at the Hyatt Regency will be interpreted in American Sign Language (ASL) and captioned with CART (Communication Access Real-time Translation). FM systems will also be provided. Great efforts are underway to ensure that ALDAcon 2001 will be totally communication accessible, educational, and fun!

Many outstanding activities are scheduled for this year's conference, including a vast array of informative workshops and inspiring speakers. Robert Davila, Vice President of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, and Nancy Bloch, Executive Director of the National Association of the Deaf, are among those already confirmed to participate in ALDAcon 2001!

Following the workshops each day, be sure to partake in the conference's main social events. Start off ALDAcon 2001 at the Monster Mash Bash Welcome Reception on Halloween. (Costumes are optional.) On Saturday night, sing to your heart's content at ALDAcon's hallmark happening – the Karaoke Party! It is a care-free, liberating evening of pure delight where singing is more the exception than the rule. Wrap up ALDAcon 2001 with all your new and old friends at the Farewell Brunch on Sunday morning.

The workshops and social events planned for ALDAcon 2001 will lend plenty of opportunity for enjoyment and education, but fun and learning need not be limited to the conference alone. Famous for its elegant mansions and captivating harbor views, ALDAcon 2001's host city is home to some of the world's most beautiful sights and fascinating history. Sample a few of Newport's diverse offerings while you are in town. Whether your destination is Newport's bustling wharf or one of its serene seaside picture spots, there is an occasion to explore or relax around every cobblestone corner. Some of the city's many points of interest include:

- Museums, music festivals, and art galleries.
- Cobblestone walkways lined with one-of-a-kind shops.
- Superb waterfront dining and unique culinary experiences like the Newport Dinner Train.
- Sunset harbor cruises and sailing excursions.
- Cliff Walk, a 3.6 mile walking path with spectacular views of Narragansett Bay and Newport's illustrious mansions.
- America's oldest tavern, synagogue, and library in Newport's historic district.
- Beaches, parks, and a multitude of recreational activities.

Do not miss this once in a lifetime opportunity to explore "America's First Resort" while attending a conference that is inspiring, enlightening, encouraging, and completely communication accessible! Access at ALDAcon 2001 will be a luxury matched only by Newport's sumptuous Victorian mansions. ALDA-Boston warmly invites you to indulge yourself in all that Newport and ALDAcon have to offer. Save the date and plan to attend ALDAcon 2001 from October 31-November 4 at the Hyatt Regency in Newport, Rhode Island. This is one "Odyssey by the Sea" that is guaranteed to be a voyage to remember.

For more information about ALDAcon 2001, the Hyatt Regency, Newport, and Southwest Airlines - the preferred airline for the conference), visit the ALDA-Boston web site at www.aldaboston.org, or the ALDA Inc. web site at www.alda.org. You may also contact Lori Heir, Public Relations Chairperson, at aldacon2001pr@yahoo.com, or MATP Center, Children's Hospital, 1295 Boylston Street, Suite 310, Boston, MA 02215. (TTY) 617-355-7167, (V) 617-355-7820, (FAX) 617-355-6345. ■

Visit our Website:

<http://www.state.ma.us/mcdhh>

Our Email:

MCDHH.Office@state.ma.us

Looking for Work? www.state.ma.us/mcdhh/opportunities.htm

Regulation and Legislative Update *Continued from page 3*

U.S. Supreme Court decision:

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of Casey Martin, the golfer who sued the PGA when the organization refused to allow him to use a golf cart during tournament play as a reasonable accommodation for his disability. Martin won an injunction against the PGA allowing him to continue to use golf carts when playing and the PGA appealed all the way to the US Supreme Court arguing that the PGA was not covered under the ADA.

The Court ruled that the PGA falls under Title III of the ADA, and that the use of golf carts is not a modification that would fundamentally alter golf tournament sponsored by the PGA. This decision provides strong support for the right of all disabled to have access to public accommodations, such as hotels, theaters, restaurants, and that such public accommodations must provide reasonable accommodations when necessary to utilize the services and programs of the Title III entity.

Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (SJC):

The SJC recently issued a ruling in the Dahill case contrary to the Supreme Court: Richard Dahill, a severely hard of hearing individual who uses hearing aids, successfully completed and graduated from the Boston Police Academy. He was terminated from the Boston Police Department because the Department felt that his hearing loss would prevent him from working effectively as a police officer. Dahill sued in Federal Court but federal law was governed by the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Sutton last summer, which held mitigating measures that "correct" the disability, such as eyeglasses or blood pressure medication, disqualifying the condition as a disability under the ADA.

The U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts asked the SJC to rule on the question of "whether Massachusetts General Laws c. 151B [Massachusetts anti-discrimination statute] requires consideration of mitigating or corrective devices in determining whether a person has a disability."

The question was particularly important in light of the 1999 Sutton type of cases, where the United States Supreme Court ruled that the use of mitigating measures such as eye glasses and/or blood pressure medications, which "correct" the disabilities, must be evaluated in determining whether a person is "disabled" under the ADA.

However, the SJC ruled that under Massachusetts Law M.G.L. c.151B, unlike the federal law under the ADA, the use of "mitigating measures" is not to be taken into account when determining whether a person is "disabled". ■

AUGUST 4, 2001



Deaf Awareness Day will be held at Six Flags New England Amusement Park in Agawam, Massachusetts on Saturday, August 4, 2001, 10am - 11pm. Rain or Shine! This event is being coordinated by Statewide Deaf Awareness Week Planning Committee, which includes a representative from MCDHH, Ruth Moore.

Admission is \$18.00 per child (36" - 48") and \$22.00 per adult. For the early bird special, contact Ruth Moore, 413.788.6427 TTY by July 20th. The early bird admission costs \$20.00 per adult. For directions, check www.sixflags.com/newengland/.

Have a Safe Summer

Address service requested

Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing
210 South Street, Fifth Floor
Boston, MA 02111

